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Chairman: Mr. Al-Hinai ..... (Oman)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 27: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/56/140)

Agenda item 108: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/56/3, A/56/57-E/2001/5, A/56/73-E/2001/68 and Add.1, A/56/114-E/2001/93 and Add.1, A/56/169, A/56/180, A/56/288-E/2001/104; A/C.3/56/L.2 and L.3)

Agenda item 109: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/56/152)

1. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan) endorsed the statement made on 8 October by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77. In the final document of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to the follow-up of the World Summit for Social Development, Member States had made recommendations for improving the conditions for social development worldwide, while endeavouring in particular to put an end to poverty and to remedy the harmful impact of globalization on the developing countries.

2. In spite of the efforts made by Governments and the international community since the Copenhagen summit meeting to promote development at all levels, there was still a long way to go to secure lasting social development for all the peoples of the planet. Social development was the responsibility of all States, and that required firm political will nationally as well as internationally. In his report on the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (A/56/229), the Secretary-General stated that in spite of the progress made in combating poverty, it was unlikely that many countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, would be able to achieve national social development goals. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his report, official development assistance was still vitally important in funding development efforts in developing countries, including the Sudan, if the stated goal of eradicating poverty by the year 2015 was to be attained. Social development would not come about without concerted action by the international community and compliance with obligations relating to official development assistance to the poorest countries.

3. There must also be an effective and fair solution of the external debt problem, in order to alleviate the debt burden on the developing countries, because of its damaging impact on social development. Funding must be guaranteed for the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. Likewise, it was important to pursue the reform of the international economic system and to ensure the transparency and stability of the international financial system. In particular, international institutions must become more democratic in order to be able to respond more quickly and effectively to development problems, in the context of an integrated world financial system.

4. It was also important to help the developing countries, and especially the least developed among them, in becoming more competitive on international markets, consolidating their infrastructures and benefiting from the transfer of technology, as well as in improving their human resources and building up their industrial capacity, in order to equip them to overcome the difficulties caused by the establishment of a globalized system.

5. It was admitted that the problem of poverty and inequality could not be resolved without transforming certain social structures. It was the role of the international community to mobilize financial resources to promote the strengthening of those structures. The Sudan wanted to see an international climate which favoured social development, and it took the view that the right to development was a fundamental right. There must be a stop to unilateral economic sanctions. Everybody, everywhere, must be able to obtain medicines and food. That was a fundamental right of every human being, as the General Assembly had said.

6. Endemic diseases were another issue that States had to deal with. Malaria was a major public health problem in many countries, particularly in Africa, and the growing number of victims of HIV/AIDS was another grave threat.

7. The Sudan had made significant progress in the area of social development, having adopted an efficient anti-poverty strategy. Programmes had been adopted to generate employment and create an attractive labour market in rural areas by supporting small commercial

enterprises and agricultural producers and their families. The Sudanese authorities were endeavouring to promote a system of values based on social interdependence and to give greater help to young people and retired people. The Sudan contributed to the World Youth Programme of Action to the Year 2000 and Beyond, supported youth and volunteer programmes, and had set up programmes for young people under the Ministry for Youth. The authorities continued to attach great importance to education, from both qualitative and quantitative viewpoints.

8. Her Government also gave considerable attention to the needs of older persons, a vital facet of social development. Her delegation looked forward with interest to the Second World Assembly on Ageing to be held in Madrid in 2002, and wished to take part in preparatory work for that Assembly.

9. In order to promote the social integration of persons with disabilities, her Government had created a National Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, pursuant to the relevant General Assembly resolution.

10. Her Government placed particular emphasis on programmes to promote and support the family so that it could fully play its part in social development, of which it was a vital cornerstone. The authorities were therefore preparing special programmes in anticipation of the tenth anniversary in 2004 of the International Year of the Family.

11. Collective measures to promote social development were at the very heart of the actions undertaken by the international community. The latter should cooperate closely in its consideration of such measures, taking account of the current political context, in order to improve the situation of all human beings throughout the world.

12. **Mr. Valdés** (Chile), speaking on agenda item 109 on behalf of the Rio Group, said that its member States were firmly committed to the preparatory process for the Second World Assembly on Ageing, to be held in Madrid in April 2002. The Assembly would provide an opportunity to reflect on the reality of the ageing of societies and its linkage with development and to evaluate progress achieved in the 20 years since the first Assembly and set goals for the future. The Rio Group was committed to the success of the Assembly, which would be enriched by contributions from non-governmental organizations and from a forum devoted to research, and believed that collaboration and dialogue between international organizations, Governments, civil society and the academic community would expedite the elaboration and adoption of a concrete and effective plan of action.

13. The ageing of society, which resulted from significant increases in life expectancy, was being experienced in both developed and developing countries. As for the quality of life, however, the situation was very different in the developing countries. The goals of development for all and the eradication of poverty were far from being attained, and the expansion of employment, particularly in the formal sector, and of the social protection that came with it was hard to achieve. There was often a lack of financing for pension systems and a fall in the quality of social services provided to older persons. Older persons lived longer, but often did not have sufficient resources to enable them to live independently, so that they became burdens for their families which frequently had difficulties meeting their own needs. Declines in family incomes, particularly in rural areas, made it necessary for older family members to work and their active working lives were extended, endangering their health and even their lives. The exodus of rural populations to cities resulted in the separation of older persons from the younger members of their families, forcing them to perform tasks which at times exceeded their physical abilities. The recent phenomenon of international migration flows accelerated by globalization represented an additional burden for older persons: not only were they deprived of the assistance of younger relatives but they also had to take care of children left behind by their parents. In countries affected by HIV/AIDS, caring for the sick and raising the children of parents affected by the illness also became the responsibility of older persons. The latter were often marginalized and, with failing strength and reduced family incomes, had to cope with the grave material and psychological situation of the children.

14. It was undeniable that older persons had the capacity to lead meaningful and significant lives. To enable them to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by increased life expectancy, Governments, the international community, particularly international organizations and international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society must create an appropriate environment, focusing efforts on the eradication of poverty in order to achieve people-

centred development, enabling the elderly to grow old in health and dignity.

15. The countries of the Rio Group were committed to that objective and would make every effort to ensure that it was adequately reflected in the plan of action which would emanate from the forthcoming World Assembly. They hoped that the Assembly would also be an opportunity to listen to the voices of older persons and benefit from their contributions, to meet their needs, but also to integrate them fully in the life of societies. The Rio Group States thanked Spain for its offer to host the Assembly, and expressed their appreciation to the Preparatory Committee for the quality of the draft plan of action; they were ready to begin without delay deliberations and negotiations on the draft.

16. **Ms. Samah** (Algeria) said that despite concerted and well-targeted action by the international community to eradicate poverty, humanize globalization and redress inequalities, much remained to be done to turn commitments into reality.

17. Improved living conditions, by extending life expectancy, meant that developed countries faced the challenge of an ageing population as now did developing countries, who did not have the same human and material resources at their disposal. Although the issue should be addressed by the Second World Assembly on Ageing, it was important, in order to preserve the consensus thus far achieved, to avoid introducing into the preparatory work certain concepts, such as the rights-based approach to development, or euthanasia, which lent themselves to controversy or were contrary to many countries' laws or moral and religious values.

18. Convinced that social justice depended on the integration of all social groups, Algeria in its Constitution had provided for the protection of those of its citizens who were unable or no longer able to work, such as disabled persons, children and older persons; the State also involved many public agencies in its activities in that connection.

19. Social services gave priority to training, the strengthening of financial services and sustainable means of development, health, communications and the legal and regulatory field.

20. The Government also focused on the family which was a tool for social cohesion and economic development.

21. The system of cooperatives — providing a framework for mutual assistance and solidarity and a care mechanism that contributed indisputably to the country's economic and social development — was governed by the same arrangement, supplemented by implementing decrees for each activity sector.

22. Her delegation wished to elaborate on the guidelines contained in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General on cooperatives in social development (A/56/73-E/2001/68) by recommending the establishment, within the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), of a technical and administrative support structure for the cooperative movement in developing countries; the setting up of an international fund for the development of the cooperative movement; the creation, under United Nations auspices, of an international cooperative institute; and the organization every five years, under the aegis of the United Nations, of a world congress of heads of the most representative cooperatives from continents, regions and subregions, to assess the state of the cooperative movement in the world.

23. In order to create an enabling environment for development and for the elimination of poverty, in accordance with commitments made at various summits and conferences, the international community should provide active support for the cooperative movement, which represented an instrument for development in general, and for social development in particular.

24. **Ms. Vioti** (Brazil) said that she wished to align herself with the statements made by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77, of Chile on behalf of the Rio Group and of Uruguay on behalf of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). In Brazil, the consolidation of democratic institutions and the strengthening of participatory mechanisms had acquired new impetus in the latter half of the 1990s, permitting increasing partnership between the Government, civil society and the private sector. The difficulties Brazil faced in order to eradicate poverty and to reduce the uneven distribution of wealth made development an economic and social priority for the country. Aware that

economic growth was an insufficient objective, the Government also directed its efforts towards realizing all fundamental rights, promoting equity and combating social exclusion.

25. The agenda agreed at the World Summit on Social Development, held at Copenhagen in 1995, remained fully valid. Some of the commitments agreed in 2000 at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to a five-year follow-up of the World Summit, had acquired special significance in the light of recent events. These commitments included increasing and improving access to international markets of products and services of developing countries by reducing trade barriers and eliminating non-tariff barriers; facilitating the transfer of technologies to those countries; and reducing the negative impacts of economic instability. After a year of moderate growth, the world economy was undergoing a downturn whose effects would visibly restrict the ability of many developing countries to address their development needs. In that context, international cooperation to further the implementation of the objectives agreed in 1995 and 2000 was all the more relevant.

26. The Government was engaged in the preparatory process of the Second World Conference on Ageing, to be held at Madrid in 2002, and she was confident that the plan of action to be adopted on that occasion would set new standards for international cooperation and would provide the necessary guidance to deal with the many challenges that developing countries, in particular, were beginning to face as a result of population ageing in such areas as the financing of pensions, social welfare, access to services, public health, infrastructure and employment.

27. Since 1994, Brazil had pursued a National Policy on Ageing implemented by five regional forums which ensured coordination in close cooperation with non-governmental organizations. A pension system had been nonetheless established at the federal level to provide the equivalent of a minimum wage to individuals over 67 years of age who did not have family support or the means to provide for their own subsistence.

28. A similar stipend was being provided to disabled persons who were unable to work or live independently. In 1999, Brazil had signed the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, which was currently being considered by the Congress. The State Secretariat for Social Assistance ensured the implementation of policies for the qualification and rehabilitation of disabled persons, aimed at guaranteeing their social integration and full participation in society.

29. Together with other federal agencies and the private sector, the State Secretariat for Social Assistance was implementing two larger projects for youth. The project on the role of youth in social and human development had already prepared more than 10,000 young people in the 15-to-17-year-old bracket to serve their own communities in the areas of health, sports, culture, tourism, the environment and social services. The project on youth centres had led to the establishment of 40 facilities throughout Brazilian territory which offered young people a place to meet, obtain information on the various health and social services available to them and have access to online services through the free use of computers.

30. **Mr. Kallehauge** (Denmark), speaking on agenda item 108, said that the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities should continue to guide the work of the international community, and that the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development had done a tremendous job in promoting the use of the Standard Rules. Much remained to be done, however, particularly at the national level.

31. Denmark, for its part, was striving to improve the situation of persons with disabilities through international cooperation. In November 2000, it had hosted the Nordic Conference on Development Cooperation and the Disability Dimension, which had culminated in a communiqué in which the Nordic countries undertook to promote the inclusion of the disability aspect in all development activities of the United Nations, the World Bank, the European Union and international development organizations. Denmark was working to convince UNICEF and UNESCO, in particular, to include in their programmes initiatives aimed at improving the lives of people with disabilities. In the context of its bilateral assistance to Nepal and Uganda, for example, Denmark ensured that education was open to disabled children.

32. The Seminar on Human Rights and Disability, convened by the Special Rapporteur on Disability at

the Almåsa Conference Centre in November 2000, had led to the conclusion that disability was not only a social but also a human rights issue. Furthermore, the trend over the past decade had apparently been to establish rights for persons with disabilities as a supplement to traditional welfare policy, which suggested that the two aspects should be stressed at both the national and international levels.

33. **Mr. Jørgensen** (Denmark), speaking in his capacity as the representative of the Danish Youth Council, said that the prudent decision to postpone the special session on children in view of recent events should not lead to an indefinite postponement, since children's rights were of great importance.

34. Since millions of children lived in extreme poverty, Member States must fulfil their responsibilities with a view to ensuring that official development assistance, at the very least, reached established United Nations targets. In order to mobilize youth properly as a necessary development resource, more knowledge on their involvement and impact was needed. His Government and the Danish Youth Council therefore encouraged the United Nations Development Programme to give special attention to youth in its annual Human Development Report, for example, by fleshing out general statistics and documentation with specific information on young people from 15 to 24 years of age. The Danish Youth Council also proposed that consideration should be given to devoting a future Human Development Report to youth.

35. Since young people risked being infected with AIDS or HIV for lack of the necessary information or proper reproductive health services, governments should include information on sexual and reproductive health in the curricula of all educational institutions in order to help young people understand their own sexuality and take responsible decisions.

36. Many young people the world over would never have an opportunity to influence decisions that directly affected them. Referring to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, he said that the Danish Youth Council urged Member States to ensure that their delegations to the General Assembly included more youth representatives of both sexes.

37. **Mr. Shen** Guofang (China) said that the international community as a whole had made great efforts to implement the recommendations made in the final documents of the World Summit for Social Development and the special session of the General Assembly on social development, but that those efforts were meeting serious obstacles. According to the *Report on the World Social Situation, 2001*, since the 1990s income inequality worldwide had gone from bad to worse and the income gap between developed and developing countries, urban and rural areas, men and women, had on the whole become increasingly wide. In a global workforce of 3 billion, between 750 million and 1 billion were under-employed; in the field of health, the traditional illnesses and new types of infectious disease, especially HIV/AIDS, were a drain on the resources for social development.

38. In order to translate into reality the proposals and initiatives put forward in those final documents, countries must join in a common effort in three areas: the creation of a peaceful and stable international environment, a stepped-up international cooperation for social development and the defence of the interests of vulnerable groups.

39. Currently, terrorism had become a major threat to world peace and stability, and in some regions and countries, protracted armed conflict and warfare had caused such enormous loss of life and property that they had undermined the future social development of the local people. The situation would not improve unless the countries of the world fulfilled their responsibility to maintain peace and stability and strengthened international cooperation against terrorism, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and unless they sought peaceful solutions to enduring conflicts and wars.

40. Regarding international cooperation for social development, while the major responsibility to ensure the social development of their people rested on Governments, yet the international community as a whole, as globalization proceeded, also had important responsibilities. It should take appropriate action to halt the deterioration of the environment, the diminishing of resources and the unchecked spread of terrible diseases in the developing countries. Furthermore, in the common interest of mankind, the developed countries should fulfil their pledges to provide official development assistance, offer financial and technical assistance to the developing countries, find a fair and honest solution to the debt problems of the poor countries, and help the developing countries out of poverty as quickly as possible.

41. Countries should fully accommodate in their policies the interests of vulnerable groups — the elderly, women, children, the disabled — for only by so doing could a healthy, comprehensive, coordinated and well-balanced social development be achieved.

42. His Government had always attached importance to social development. Since adopting its opening-up policy and maintaining a rapid economic growth over the past 20 years and more, China had succeeded in adequately feeding and clothing its over 200 million rural poor. With its population of 1.3 billion, however, China still needed to accelerate its economic growth, further improve the living conditions of its people, eradicate poverty, and invest more in education, health care and public hygiene services. His Government would do everything possible to meet those daunting challenges and would take effective measures to achieve coordinated, sustained economic and social development.

43. **Ms. Neskorozhana** (Ukraine), speaking on agenda item 27, said that the review of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development had made it clear that despite the efforts of the international community, there had been little change in the social situation. Globalization and the opportunities for economic growth had not done away with the disparities among and within countries and, in spite of scientific advances and the technological revolution, hunger, disease and poverty had still not been eradicated. In order to bridge the gap between the poor and the rich, it was necessary to rethink the structure of international economic and financial cooperation. At the same time, every State should play its own crucial role in advancing people-centred sustainable development, which meant pursuing policies aimed at eradicating poverty, enhancing productive employment and guaranteeing universal and equal access to basic social services, social protection and support for vulnerable groups.

44. In Ukraine, the eradication of poverty was at the centre of national policies and specifically of the economic and social development strategies for the years 2000-2004 and the Ukraine-2010 programme. Poverty-prevention measures — increasing the minimum wage and improving the social security system — had been adopted and since the best way of fighting poverty and promoting social cohesion was to ensure full employment, a general employment plan had been developed for the creation of new businesses and the offering of tax incentives to businesses willing to establish themselves in demographically disadvantaged areas.

45. However, the country was experiencing hardship and the Government had had to take a series of urgent measures to stabilize the country's economy, attract investment, restructure businesses, improve the taxation and banking systems and shore-up national production. Ukraine hoped that once it had overcome the financial and economic crisis, it would be in a position, in particular, to pay pensions and other social benefits regularly to beneficiaries and to increase the amounts. It should be pointed out, however, that the international community had not given Ukraine the support it had undertaken to provide to it and the other countries in transition under the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. Ukraine therefore took the opportunity to ask for help in achieving greater integration into the global economy through the opening-up of international markets to its products, the removal of tariff barriers, the expansion of multilateral trade and a greater transparency and accountability on the part of the financial institutions.

46. The United Nations should redouble its efforts to promote social development and, to that end, strengthen the effectiveness of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, especially the Commission for Social Development.

47. **Ms. Otiti** (Uganda) said that all the issues covered by the agenda items under consideration had their roots in inequality of opportunity; the challenge of trying to establish a society of equals was becoming increasingly great. In particular, it was very difficult to meet the needs of the poorest people without endangering the stability of other population groups, particularly in the developing countries. Therefore, she was pleased with Member States' continued commitment to launch the global campaign for poverty eradication.

48. She reaffirmed her Government's political will to achieve its literacy goals for all with special emphasis on universal primary education, a goal which it hoped to attain in the not-too-distant future. The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative had enabled it to make further progress towards achieving its education goals.

49. She applauded the efforts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to make the international community aware of the need to expand education and mobilize additional resources to that end. She hoped that the global strategy developed by UNESCO for that purpose would yield successes that could be translated to the regional and national levels, thus ensuring the success of the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

50. She also commended the report of the Secretary-General on Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/56/169 and Corr.1). The potential of disabled persons had long been ignored because of misconceptions about them. The fact that, according to the Secretary-General's report, persons with disabilities did not obtain prominent mention in the priority areas identified in the documents adopted at the special sessions and the Millennium Assembly attested amply to that problem. Many of the barriers faced by disabled persons were the result of a failure to attain most of the equity objectives, but it was clear that with better health services, many disabilities could be avoided in poor countries. Her delegation therefore looked forward to the outcome of the study of reasons for the exclusion of children with disabilities, which the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had had carried out by its Innocenti Research Centre. It also welcomed the support that specialized bodies and agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNESCO provided for projects designed to enable communities to improve the lives of disabled persons.

51. Uganda had received financial assistance from the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability in order to implement a wheelchair project and a sign-language-training project, to assist the National Association of the Deaf and to develop a parent-training project.

52. Since ageing was inevitable, it was encouraging that the international community was moving towards the adoption of a plan of action on ageing. Her delegation commended the Government of Spain for its commitment to host the Second World Assembly on Ageing.

53. Most countries recognized the family as the basic unit of society. The family was currently experiencing a breakdown which, though not catastrophic, was nonetheless real. As a result, it was becoming increasingly difficult to meet the needs of older, disabled and young persons and to guarantee social development. Therefore, efforts to refocus attention on the family were especially welcome.

54. **Ms. Kristiansen** (Norway), speaking on agenda item 108, said that the United Nations system and Member States should help young people to combat injustice and poverty and to participate in the development of national and international policies. To that end, Member States should implement the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy, adopted at the fourth session of the World Youth Forum, held in Dakar in August 2001, and consider strengthening the United Nations Youth Unit to promote the influence on the United Nations of young people throughout the world. United Nations agencies should also improve their dialogue with non-governmental organizations.

55. For over 30 years, the Norwegian Government had included youth representatives in its delegation to the General Assembly; she encouraged other Member States to follow that practice, particularly as the involvement of young people in the preparation for world conferences and other important United Nations activities would inspire in them an interest in those events. It would also be very useful to prepare a special report on young people's opportunities to influence political decision-making.

56. No issue was more important to future generations than peace. Therefore, in order to avoid an escalation of violence and terror, as the events of 11 September 2001 had tragically illustrated, it was essential to invest in health, participation and, above all, education, which was perhaps the single most important factor in development. Thus, it was all the more significant that there were still 130 million children who had no access to primary education, which meant that the communities in which they were growing up were being denied the foundations for future development. She also drew attention to the fact that two thirds of the many children who were not in school were girls; no development strategy was better than one that involved women as central players.

57. **Mr. Fall** (Senegal) said, with reference to agenda item 108, that participants at the fourth session of the World Youth Forum, held in Dakar from 6 to 10 August 2001, had expressed their grave concern at the ever worsening situation of young people throughout the world, particularly in the developing countries, where they encountered numerous serious problems, including poverty, unemployment, epidemics, illiteracy and armed conflict. The participants had reiterated their concern about child labour, the trafficking in and sexual exploitation of children, young people in situations of armed conflict, and the exclusion suffered by young people affected by HIV/AIDS.

58. With regard to education and training, they had noted that, despite advances in basic education, the inequalities arising out of their social and economic conditions, sex or disability continued to prevent thousands of children and young people from receiving an education. To guarantee universal access to education in accordance with the framework for action adopted by the World Forum on Education, held in Dakar in April 2000, they had suggested the establishment of an education and information and communication technologies fund, an increase in education budgets and the implementation of education policies and programmes with a special focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups.

59. The Forum participants had also given careful consideration to the link between education and employment. In that context, they had supported the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a youth employment network and urged Governments to submit annual reports on the topic, together with plans of action for youth employment. They had also invited the United Nations to improve its methods of working with youth organizations, to increase youth representation on those of its bodies which dealt with young people, and to increase the scope and the resources of the Youth Unit in the Secretariat so that it could carry out its work more effectively.

60. Like the Forum participants, his delegation hoped that the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy adopted by the Forum would be considered and endorsed by the United Nations. It was, like the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, a consensus document and thus an important tool for decision makers, who would be enabled, as stated in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Programme (A/56/180), to address the concerns of young people from a multidisciplinary perspective that allowed for integrated and cross-sectoral policy interventions and a comprehensive approach to youth issues.

61. Since assuming office in April 2000, the President of Senegal had put young people into positions of power, giving them important responsibilities. The practical outcome of the Government's commitment to tackling the problems of young people as a matter of urgency was the ever increasing participation of young people in the national work of reconstruction and development. One example was the "citizens' vacations" programme, which involved thousands of young people voluntarily helping with environmental protection and regeneration in villages throughout the country. In other words, despite limited resources and a host of structural constraints, Senegal was taking practical steps to ensure full participation at every level by young people and their organizations in the fields that most closely affected them.

62. **Ms. Hagon** (Australia) said, with reference to agenda item 108, that young people were key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation, as emphasized by the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. They should therefore be given greater opportunities to participate in the economic, social, political and cultural aspects of their societies and communities.

63. Her Government had launched a national youth policy, which gave priority to communication between the Government and young people, and introduced a national youth week, which highlighted the positive contribution of young people to society. Various other initiatives included youth media awards and a youth information web site, as well as various forums through which young people could communicate directly with the Government on issues affecting them. Youth-run non-governmental organizations also performed invaluable work.

64. Member States could promote youth participation at every level by including youth representatives in delegations to the General Assembly or other United Nations conferences. Her Government, which had adopted that practice, commended the approach to other countries.

65. The World Youth Forum provided a unique opportunity for young people from around the world to meet and exchange views. Her Government had therefore provided funding for youth representatives to attend the past two sessions. While the United Nations Youth Unit must retain primary responsibility for the Forum, it was essential that young people and youth organizations should participate in the planning and organizing of such a major international event. Local, regional and international initiatives that promoted the participation and empowerment of youth should also be developed.

66. Poverty, malnutrition, the HIV/AIDS problem and lack of access to health services and education directly affected not only the current but also future generations of young people. International efforts were vital to addressing such issues. Education constituted the most basic building block, being essential for development and a prerequisite for youth empowerment and participation. Violence, intolerance, armed conflict and hatred had a devastating effect on young people throughout the world, yet it was young people who held out the hope of a peaceful, secure and less violent future, if they received proper support. Member States should view young people not as a burden or as a challenge but as an invaluable resource.

67. **Mr. Mbanefo** (Nigeria) observed that an array of reports on social issues had been submitted to the Committee and required immediate attention. The extract from the Report on the World Social Situation 2001 (E/2001/104) highlighted the widening disparity in the income of developed and developing countries. Globalization, technological advances, especially the revolution in computer science, structural-adjustment programmes and liberalization policies had resulted in a deterioration in social services in the less advanced countries. The policies adopted by most developed countries to restore the equilibrium of international trade had done little to boost employment or promote sustained economic growth. Since the relationship between States and the market was complex, it was essential that decision makers heeded the particular circumstances of various countries at different stages of their history. Until the international community mustered the requisite political will, it would be impossible to attain the goal set at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, namely to halve poverty by 2015. United Nations reports on that subject were not exactly optimistic, nor were the forecasts of the United Nations Development Programme or the World Bank, which indicated that 70 countries, most of which were in Africa, would miss that target.

68. Since coming to power in 1999, the Nigerian Government had made poverty eradication its priority. To that end, it was drawing up a strategic document with the active support of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and it had implemented a five-year plan (2001-2005) designed to improve the economic situation, which had suffered from several military interventions over the past three decades. The National Poverty Eradication Council, chaired by President Obasanjo, was responsible for formulating and implementing policies chiefly aimed at reducing poverty by 2005. Transparency and economic good sense would be the watchwords when channelling resources towards that objective. Since Nigeria by itself could not supply all the necessary resources, it welcomed foreign investment in the agricultural and industrial sectors. Moreover, the international community would have to grant Nigeria a substantial reduction of its debt if the country were to complete successfully such fundamental social and economic reforms as the strengthening of institutions and the development of human resources.

69. Economic success was predicated on young people receiving an education that enabled them to find work and avoid the social ills caused by unemployment. The Universal Basic Education Programme made primary and junior-secondary schooling compulsory and free. The National Youth Service Corps encouraged youth participation in the implementation of national policies concerning them. Two banks founded by the Government lent young people start-up capital. The National Directorate of Employment helped them to acquire job skills, and young Nigerians who had received vocational training went to other developing countries under the Technical Aid Corps Programme.

70. As the Secretary-General had noted in his report "Support for volunteering" (A/56/288), volunteers played a vital role in preserving the stability and cohesion of societies and their economic contribution was significant. The Nigerian Government had recognized the need to involve volunteers in projects focusing on the eradication of poverty, but they could also play a big role in the campaign which had been launched at the instigation of the Nigerian President

against HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmissible diseases.

71. In implementing the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the Government sought to ensure that all Nigerians were treated equally and, in keeping with the principles of the African Decade of Disabled Persons (2000-2009), designed to incorporate the question of disability in the social, economic and political agenda of all African States, it had adopted measures to secure access to training, rehabilitation services and employment for the whole population.

72. **Mr. Knyazhinskiy** (Russian Federation) said that recent events had shown the extent to which terrorism, organized crime, aggressive separatism, ethnic discord and the trafficking in drugs and weapons posed a threat to the world. So far only a few developed countries were able to enjoy the benefits of scientific and technical progress. That was why the Commission for Social Development had to monitor the way in which States honoured the commitments they had accepted in Copenhagen and Geneva, including their pledges of initiatives to step up international cooperation with countries in transition. The Commission's new multi-year programme of work 2002-2006 would make it possible, through a balanced approach which took account of the interests of all regional groups of States, to press on with the international drive to overcome the worst social evils outlined in the documents stemming from the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, documents which still defined the thrust of action plans and programmes which set out to give a social dimension to the market economy.

73. In recent years, the Russian Government had been devoting more and more money to the social field. For the first time in Russia's history the education budget had topped that of defence. The Government had also embarked on a complete reform of the social sector. Russia had established a medium-term socio-economic development programme which formed part of the socio-economic development strategy for the period up until 2010.

74. His delegation considered that in order to solve social problems it was necessary to adopt a policy of supporting the family. That was why the Russian Federation fully supported the efforts of the Commission for Social Development to intensify international cooperation to strengthen the family and its role in the education of children. The Russian Federation supported the initiative to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 at national, regional and international levels, and considered that the report of the Secretary-General on the matter (E/CN.5/2001/4) could serve as a basis for its preparations.

75. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the Secretary-General, in his report on the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (A/56/180), emphasized the efforts of the Government of the Russian Federation to improve the situation of youth. The Russian Federation was ready to increase bilateral and multilateral cooperation with interested countries and international organizations in that field.

76. The Russian Federation supported the decisions taken at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Second World Assembly on Ageing concerning the agenda, programme of work and conditions for the participation of non-governmental organizations. The Russian Federation considered, however, that the work to draw up the Revised International Plan of Action on Ageing must be accelerated.

77. **Mr. Al-Sulaiti** (Qatar) said that economic growth would not be sufficient to eradicate poverty. The equitable distribution of wealth was just as important. In line with the objectives defined at the World Summit for Social Development, the United Nations accorded priority to development. The Commission for Social Development played an important role in that regard. However, particularly in the developing countries, the majority of peoples continued to live in conditions of poverty which were deteriorating all the time, unemployment was increasing while working conditions were worsening, the debt burden was increasingly onerous, raw material prices were too low, and there was a reduction in official development assistance and in the sums of money available for social investment. The international community should therefore endeavour to find the means of eradicating poverty, especially with the support of the United Nations specialized agencies and the developed countries. The latter should provide adequate economic resources, but should also reduce the debt of the poor countries and open their markets to the products of those countries.

78. Qatar was devoting sizeable resources to infrastructure development and vocational training, particularly for persons with special needs. It had taken measures to ensure equality between men and women and the integration of the latter into the development process. Qatar, which considered family stability a vehicle for social integration and harmony, had established a Supreme Council for Family Affairs, which had proposed various laws and adopted a development programme for women, children, older persons and those with special needs.

79. The International Year of Older Persons had furthered increased awareness of the demographic changes that were taking place both in the developed world and in the developing countries. The latter needed additional resources to meet the needs of older persons in terms of health, and to enable them to continue to play a productive role in society. The Second World Assembly on Ageing, to be held in Madrid in 2002, should enable global strategies to be drawn up. To achieve sustainable development, it was imperative to ensure the participation of all members of society, especially the young. Social development programmes had to be put in place, with the help of the private sector. That was why Qatar welcomed the efforts of the United Nations specialized agencies in the field of social growth.

80. **Mr. Khalid** (Pakistan), speaking on agenda item 27, said that his delegation fully associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Social development was a principle enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and in 1995 some 117 heads of State and Government had re-committed themselves to that principle at the World Summit for Social Development, which had resulted in the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, whose main objectives were the eradication of poverty, the promotion of employment, the enhancement of social integration and capacity building. Five years later, at its twenty-fourth special session, the General Assembly had recognized that increased priority had been accorded to social development in national policies and at the international level, and a call for the mobilization of additional resources so that political will could translate into specific actions. But inequalities between countries persisted, poverty and social exclusion were getting worse, and HIV/AIDS and malaria had brought development virtually to a halt. A debt burden that was unsustainable, reverse financial flows, unequal terms of trade and unequal market access hampered the progress of the developing countries, especially those beset by armed conflicts. Pakistan itself had had to spend disproportionate sums on armaments because of the unresolved conflict affecting the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The international community, and the United Nations in particular, must redouble its efforts to find peaceful settlements to those conflicts. It would then be possible to invest in the social sector the enormous resources thereby released.

81. Although globalization offered a wealth of opportunities, its negative impact should be contained and its benefits equally distributed, as world leaders had acknowledged at the Millennium Summit. A partnership involving the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, Governments, non-governmental organizations and relevant civil society actors was essential to achieving the vision of a just and equitable world. To that end, there must be synergy between commitments made at the national and international levels. Affluent countries must agree to alleviate the debt of poor countries, to offer them improved market access and to increase official development assistance.

82. Social development was a priority for the Government of Pakistan, which despite external and domestic constraints was continuing its march towards sustained growth, poverty alleviation and improved living conditions. For that purpose, it had decreased its expenditure on defence in favour of the social sector, initiated employment-generation programmes — particularly in low-income areas — micro-credit schemes to help small and medium-sized enterprises, and rural and urban development programmes, to complement the existing Social Action Programme, as well as a three-year literacy programme implemented in partnership with the private sector and public sector organizations, with emphasis on rural areas. Since August 2000, financial and development decision-making had been transferred to directly elected local administrations. It was noteworthy that 33 per cent of seats in those administrations were reserved for women. That first step towards revival of a true participatory democracy should promote poverty reduction and contribute to the country's sustainable development.

83. Furthermore, the terrorist attacks on the United States of 11 September and the resultant tensions in Pakistan and neighbouring countries had put a temporary hold on the country's progress towards prosperity. The Government — which had adopted an unambiguous stand against the global menace of terrorism — fully supported the efforts of the international community to address the issue and needed its assistance in dealing with the expected arrival in Pakistan of more than 1.5 million Afghan refugees, an influx that could lead to a massive humanitarian crisis.

84. **Mr. Howell** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that, despite recent shocks and current uncertainties, incomes were continuing to rise and innovations were flourishing in many parts of the world; elsewhere, however, economic inequality and exclusion were on the increase. The global economy must be capable of providing decent jobs and adequate and family-friendly working conditions to the majority. Moreover, market access should be identical for all countries, and discrimination in the workplace should be outlawed. Remunerated work represented the best means of escaping poverty. Concerned to reconcile the social and economic components of development, ILO had adopted a Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in 1998. In November, pursuant to the request of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, ILO would be organizing a Global Employment Forum, to be held at Geneva, which would seek to place decent employment at the centre of economic and social policy, nationally and globally. ILO was working closely with the World Bank in national implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. ILO was also working towards the adoption of a new instrument to replace ILO Recommendation 127 on the Role of Cooperatives in the Economic and Social Development of Developing Countries.

85. ILO continued to initiate programmes that addressed each stage of the life cycle. ILO Convention 159 concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) called for equal treatment of disabled persons. Between 1999 and 2001, a further 10 countries had joined the 73 others which had ratified the Convention. The ILO Disability Programme was active in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the West Bank and Gaza, assisting with projects for young people with disabilities in seven African countries, in the framework of the African Decade of Disabled Persons. In 2000-2001, ILO had cooperated with the World Health Organization on a series of publications on mental health and the workplace.

86. In his report to the Millennium Assembly, the Secretary-General had called the attention of world leaders to youth unemployment and committed himself, together with the heads of the World Bank and ILO, to establish the Policy Network on Youth Unemployment in order to find solutions to the problem. The network had met in July 2001 and would submit recommendations to the General Assembly later in the year. In order to respect ILO Older Workers Recommendation, 1980 (No. 162), and in view of the conclusions of the World Employment Report 2001, measures were needed, in collaboration with employers' and workers' organizations, to ensure the maximum participation of older workers in economic life and society. The pressure on existing social security systems was a growing concern in all the countries where such systems existed. In many countries, and particularly developing countries, grandmothers had to care for their grandchildren, whose parents had died of HIV/AIDS but had no work, financial means or social protection. The Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, adopted by ILO in 2001, sought to provide guidance for developing national policy and programmes. Lastly, ILO was active in the preparatory process for the Second World Assembly on Ageing, to be held in 2002, and the revision of the International Plan of Action on Ageing.

87. **Mr. Leete** (United Nations Population Fund), speaking on agenda item 109, said that with the extension of life expectancy — one of mankind's greatest achievements — population ageing had become a phenomenon of major significance for all societies. While older persons had attracted a great deal of supportive concern in the more developed countries, the rapidly-changing population structure in developing countries had aroused little attention, although 350 million persons aged 60 and over lived in those countries, compared with 225 million in more developed regions. Those totals would only increase in the decades ahead.

88. It was therefore necessary to adopt policies capable of responding to people's needs and expectations, particularly to promote lifelong education, training and health care; to recognize the

services provided by older persons, particularly women, in raising their grandchildren, orphaned by HIV/AIDS — a problem that was especially acute throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa; to eliminate violence and other crimes against older persons and the inter-generational violence arising from poverty; to strengthen support systems to ensure the material well-being of older persons; and to ensure that they received the necessary social services and welfare protection. Governments should create a favourable climate and non-governmental organizations, communities and the private sector should facilitate positive action; policy dialogue could bring different stakeholders together and provide a basis for action.

89. The development goals established at the Millennium Summit, disaggregated by age and sex, provided clear guidelines to follow in order to meet the basic needs of older persons.

90. The strategy on population ageing formulated by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) was guided by the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the recommendations endorsed by the General Assembly at the time of the review conducted five years after the Conference. That review had led to a further series of recommendations focused on fostering inter-generational dialogue and solidarity, the development of strategies and the need to document positive experiences of policies and programmes in the area of ageing.

91. The Fund continued to be actively involved in the preparatory activities for the Second World Assembly on Ageing and would be convening an international expert group meeting on population ageing and development, in collaboration with the Programme on Ageing of the Division for Social Policy and Development, in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and two non-governmental organizations, the American Association of Retired Persons and HelpAge International.

92. In conclusion, UNFPA wished to commend the efforts of the Division for Social Policy and Development, which was the secretariat for the Second World Assembly on Ageing, and its role in the preparation of the draft international strategy of action on ageing 2002.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.